

**STATEMENT OF DENIS P. GALVIN
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND RELATED AGENCIES
CONSIDERING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 1998**

April 10, 1997

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to appear before you to discuss the fiscal year 1998 budget request of the National Park Service.

OVERVIEW

The fiscal year 1998 budget request for the National Park Service is \$1.6 billion, which reflects a net increase of \$176 million, or 12.4 percent above the FY 1997 enacted amount. A major part of our request--\$100 million--will support interagency activities and projects associated with recovery and restoration of the Everglades ecosystem which is recognized as one of the world's most unique watershed environments. Enactment of our requested increases will also enable the Park Service to maintain, and in some instances, upgrade the current level of services provided the 276 million people who are expected to visit the national parks in fiscal year 1998. The funding, additionally, will be used to initiate operations at the five new parks established through the enactment of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996. The budget also provides enhancements to the Service's natural and cultural resource management programs, continues support of the Elwha River ecosystem restoration project, and assumes an expanded role in the development and promotion of partnership opportunities throughout the National Park System.

Mr. Chairman, this request continues the Administration's leadership and focus on the protection and preservation of the national parks, which remains a high priority with the President and the American people. For the protection and preservation of the national parks, this budget provides increased funding of \$65.7 million (which is 5.5% above the fiscal year 1997 level) for operations at the Service's 374 units. Included in the total is \$20 million for mandated employee pay raises; \$8 million to provide a one percent across-the-board increase for all parks and the U.S. Park Police in order to offset the increased costs of routine services such as utilities, service contracts, and in-grade promotions; and \$16.3 million for 63 parks to address more complex budgetary needs. The parks selected for this added funding are reflective of the diversity of park units within the National Park System and are parks that are facing numerous challenges and impacts to their resources. Examples of the parks supported by this request include Nicodemus NHS, Kansas, where funding will allow us to begin operating the site and provide for preservation and stabilization assistance to a number of historic properties; the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., where the added funding will be used for grounds, utility and other maintenance needs. At the more established parks, such as the Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, the funding increase will be used to operate and maintain new visitor parking, orientation, interpretive, and administrative facilities which are scheduled to come online in 1998; at Glen Canyon NRA, Arizona, the funding will enable the Park Service to meet a partnership pledge to other Federal agencies and the Navajo Tribe to operate new facilities at Antelope Point Marina and provide law enforcement, maintenance and interpretive services to 600,000 people who annually visit this location.

A proud note, Mr. Chairman, and one in which this Committee and all Americans should take extreme pride, is that this year marks the 125th anniversary of the establishment of Yellowstone--our first national park. In the years since this designation, the National Park Service was created, and an impressive system of national parks that now numbers 374 units followed. That we are able to visit and experience Yellowstone, essentially as it appeared in 1872, underscores the need for the highest level of protection for the national parks and validates the wisdom shown by the Congress and the Administration with the passage of the 1996 Omnibus Parks Act. Funding proposed for the National Park Service enables us to meet our basic obligation to protect, preserve, and present to the next generation nationally significant heritage resources that are representative of this Nation and its people.

The Administration is reaffirming its commitment to environmental protection and partnerships through a \$125 million request in this budget to restore key landscape features and for ecosystem recovery in South Florida and in

Olympic National Park, Washington. The Administration has long held that the restoration of vital watershed systems and processes is dependent on comprehensive and coordinated planning which combines the resources and expertise of entire communities and regions. With the support of the Congress, we can begin to make substantive progress in reclaiming these areas and arresting their current decline. We consider the passage last year of the Water Resources Development Act--which mandates that the Federal Government share the cost of reclaiming the Everglades with the State of Florida--a major partnership agreement, and the basis for our proposal to establish an Everglades Restoration Fund. The Park Service's request of \$100 million for Everglades restoration is 30 percent of the total increase requested by the Administration (\$331 million) in fiscal year 1998--a level we feel is indicative of the scale and gravity of this project as well as the importance with which we place this recovery effort. A similar integrated recovery strategy is also being undertaken to restore the Elwha River ecosystem and \$24.9 million is requested in this budget to reestablish disrupted natural processes which have resulted in diminished species populations, declining water quality and quantity, and the loss of habitat critical to wildlife and fisheries of the Pacific Northwest. As a matter of efficiency, Mr. Chairman, and in order to improve our planning, we have also included an advance appropriations request in this budget to address the outyear funding needs for these projects.

To further assist parks in meeting their responsibilities to visitors and to broaden the scope of our partnership initiative, we have proposed added funding in FY 1998 for an enhanced volunteers-in-parks program, greater support of historically black colleges and universities in cooperation with The College Fund (formerly the United Negro College Fund), and assistance to new heritage areas. Our budget provides \$10.4 million in grants to historically black colleges and universities--an increase of \$9.0 million--which will be matched to preserve significant properties at these institutions; \$2.750 million for new heritage areas that would assist State and local governments in the identification and preservation of resources and landscapes in their communities without adding to the inventory of Federal management responsibilities; \$1.0 million to support regional watershed planning initiatives; and approximately \$1.0 million to strengthen and expand individual park VIP programs. The need to develop and value partnership agreements throughout the National Park Service is both inescapable and undeniable. In addition to the achievement of obvious and immediate park goals, partnerships also presents us with a cadre of corporate and citizen supporters--a lasting benefit to the agency.

To meet our stewardship responsibilities within the natural and cultural resource management programs, the NPS has requested \$13.6 million in increases for mine reclamation, inventory and monitoring, historic structures rehabilitation, air quality monitoring and other resource management programs. The "Vanishing Treasures" initiative within the cultural resources program will reduce over a 10-year period the extent of deterioration to over 2,000 prehistoric ruins and related resources at 41 parks in the southwest. The \$3.5 million request for this program includes funding for the development of a skilled maintenance staff that would ensure a capable ruins preservation workforce in the future.

This budget also provides \$4.5 million for equipment and other information management upgrades in parks and central offices. The funding will be used to provide improved access to administrative systems, upgrade park telephone exchanges, add support positions at a number of key park locations, and enable the acquisition of needed telecommunications equipment.

In addition, the Service is requesting \$1.0 million to fund an education initiative that will be developed in consultation and cooperation with universities and academic institutions. The goals of the initiative are to: (1) foster public understanding of the national parks, (2) improve the quality of programs that we offer to the public, and (3) expand employee expertise. This initiative will fundamentally impact the manner in which park programs are made available and accessible to the educational community and the general public.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared remarks. My Associates and I will be pleased to answer any questions you or other member of the Subcommittee may have.